CITY OF
WILLMAR
MINNESOTA

Sanitary Sewer Service Repairs Information Handout

This handout provides an overview of problems that occur in sanitary sewer services. The information focuses on 1960's construction and the materials used during that period. The handout outlines the type of failures that occur, how a customer can recognize those failures and what alternatives are available for making repairs.

What is a sanitary sewer service?

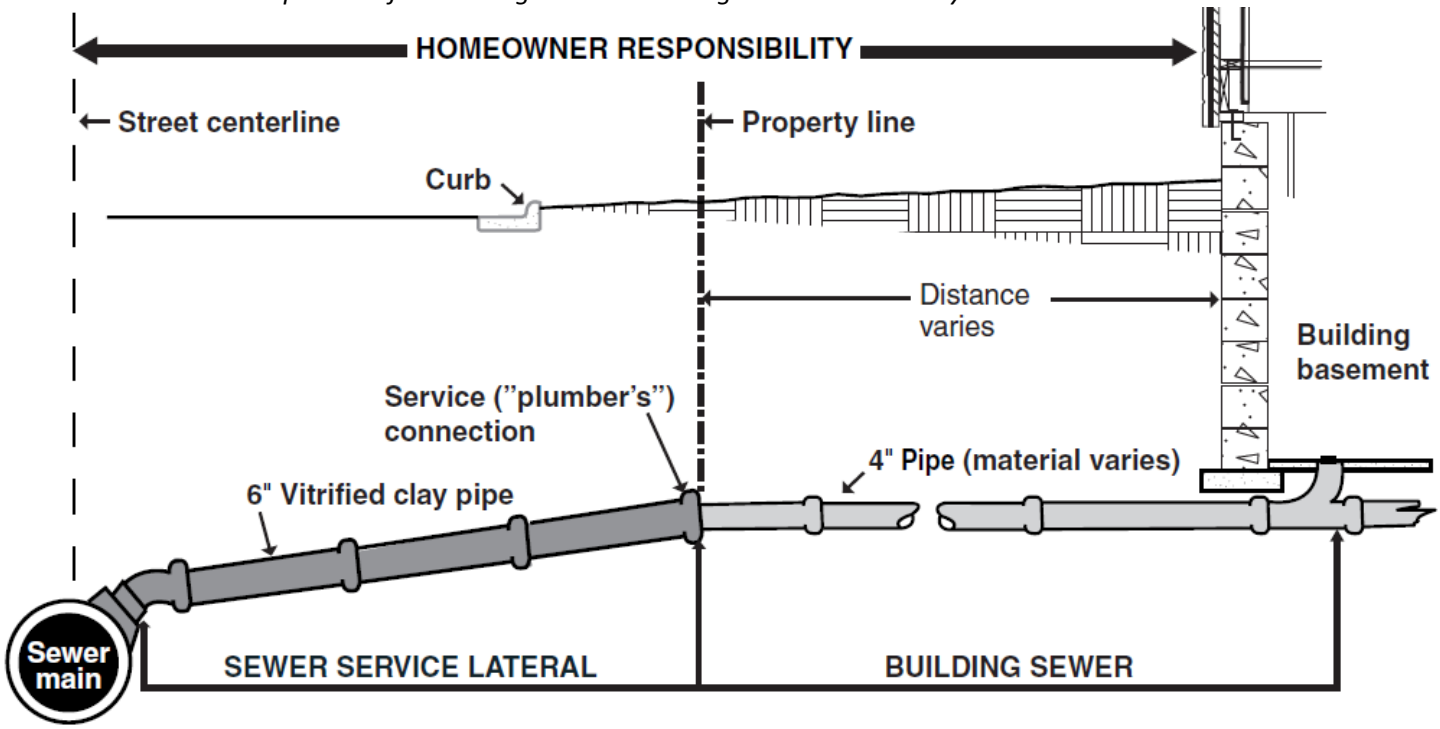
The sanitary sewer service line connects the building to the sanitary mainline in the street. The service line has two components: the sewer service lateral and the building sewer. *See illustration below.*

The building sewer coming from the home connects to the sewer service lateral at a point called the service connection or "plumber's connection." This connection was made when the building/home was originally built. The tar compound commonly used in this joint during the 1960's tends to shrink and is a primary source of failure resulting in tree root intrusion.

Note: City Code states that the property owner is responsible for cleaning and maintaining the service all the way to the main.

Sanitary sewer service

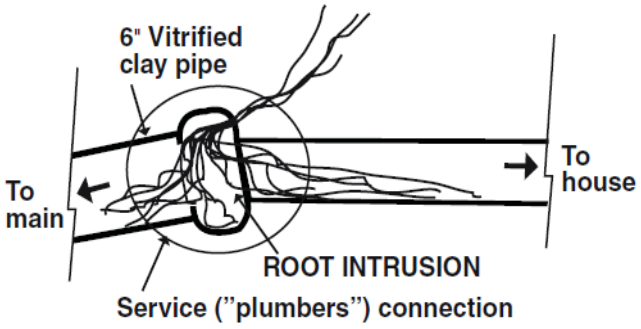
Note: Homeowner is responsible for cleaning and maintaining the line all the way to the sewer main.



Recognizing the Problem

To the right is a detail of the service connection where roots have intruded into the service line. Although root intrusion can take place at any point in the service line, the service connection is one of the most common points where failure occurs. One way to evaluate this is to ask the sewer-cleaning contractor questions about where they encounter problems during the cleaning process. If a sewer-cleaning contractor has commented that they have hit an obstruction near the property line, this may be the source of the obstruction. In many cases the root mass has grown so large within the pipe that normal cleaning does not remove the roots, but just temporarily relieves the stoppage by cutting a small hole in the root mass. In this case, excavating the line for repair may be necessary.

Root intrusion



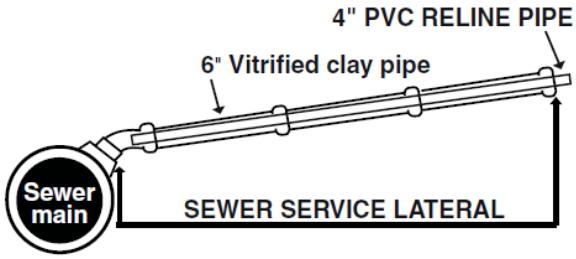
Repair and maintenance alternatives

A repair to your service line may not be required if you have the line cleaned periodically. If the root intrusion can be controlled by cleaning, it may be a cost-effective alternative to excavation and repair.

If a repair is required, the typical repair for root intrusion is at the "plumber's connection" which involves excavating the connection and removing the old pipe and the root mass that may be present. See previous illustration. Other types of repair include replacing all or part of the service line.

Another repair that minimizes excavation is called a "reline." This option improves the property owner's service line as it continues out to the City's mainline sewer without excavating in the street. A "reline" is done by placing a 4 inch PVC pipe inside the 6 inch clay pipe and then connecting that 4 inch pipe to the building pipe. It is the responsibility of the homeowner to determine which option is best suited for the particular problem in their service line.

Repair option: Reline



SANITARY SEWER REPLACEMENT POLICY

When it has been determined that tree roots and/or other problems are causing blockage of sanitary sewer service lines, it shall be the City's policy to share in the cost of sewer line replacement, regardless of property classification. The City shall pay fifty (50%) percent of the cost of the sanitary service line replacement, but in no event will the City's share exceed One Thousand Five Hundred ($1,500.00) Dollars.

The City shall participate regardless of the location of the trees causing the blockage. The City's participation will require the entire service line be replaced from the main to the building.

The City, through the Engineer, reserves the right to make exceptions to the policy in unique instances.

The City, through the Municipal Utilities, will participate in water main service line repairs, regardless of property classification, pursuant to policies and practices determined by the Municipal Utilities Commission.

Effective July 21, 2008

Procedure for proceeding with a repair

Follow these steps:

1. A property owner is responsible for initiating any repair or maintenance of their sewer service line. The City will assist the owner by providing information and history on their sewer service. **This information is very important in evaluating the condition of the service.**

Contact the Engineering Department first before proceeding!

2. The owner may use any plumber licensed to work in the City of Willmar to make the repair. The owner of homesteaded property may also do the work. This does not include hiring a non-licensed contractor. The procedure and permit requirements are the same in both cases. The City cannot recommend any specific contractor but **owners are highly encouraged to get competitive bids.**

3. After a plumber applies for an Excavation Permit, they may proceed with the needed repairs and call for an inspection upon completion. **A City employee needs to verify root obstruction in order for the City to participate in repair cost.**

Contact the Planning & Development Department for Permits & Inspections!

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